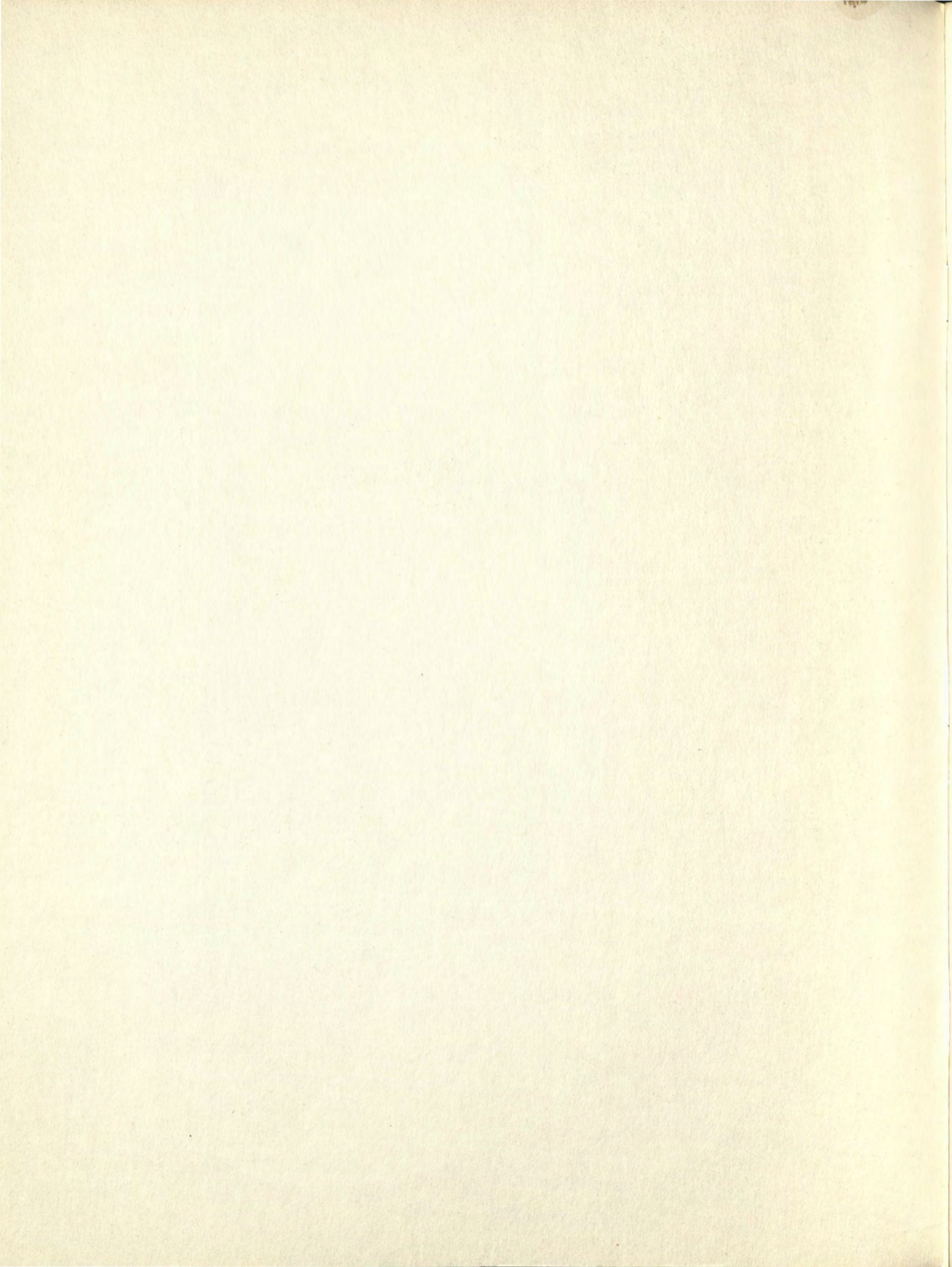




CHRYSAIDS

SPRING
1958



CHRYSALIS

One cool autumn day, God looked down, looked way down, at the earth. From His lofty gold gleaming throne God saw the earth as a painter sees his palette—a bold yet subtle mass of colors. He smiled a bit and was about to turn His gaze away when He noticed a small, oh, so very small and colorless crawling caterpillar. God paused and a frown formed between His heavenly blue eyes. "That caterpillar," He murmured to Himself, "I've got to do something about that caterpillar." So God gathered up the caterpillar and gently wrapped him in a case of many threads. God said, "Now, you stay there until I figure out what to do with you."

Time passed and the cold white winter came. God was very busy during the winter months, and before He quite realized, Spring, the soft pink time of the year, had arrived. After God dispatched life to all the little seeds and set up the schedule for spring showers, He sat back and relaxed with a contented smile on His face.

All during this time the tiny caterpillar had waited patiently in his God-woven home, hoping to be released. Now, God hadn't exactly forgotten the caterpillar, but He had pushed him to the back of His mind.

One day when the apple trees were as pretty as strawberry ice cream, God again looked down. He saw the young cotton-covered lambs in the meadows and the swirl of color marking the birds' flight. "Those birds are mighty pretty," God said, "but they move so fast. The babies and puppies can't play with them. I need something that moves more gently but is just as pretty." It was then that God thought of the caterpillar. He had stored away, God smiled, raised His hand, and out of the small brown case He had made last fall fluttered a shining butterfly.

God smiled again and said, "That's good."

Winifred Waite, Editor

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Tomorrow Another Shore

By PATRICIA LUMPKIN

The cove and the high banks that supported the dark, hawklike trees lay bathed in the chill of an early summer morning. All was still save for the murmur of the retreating tide that left the irregular shoreline exposing countless odd-shaped shells, scattered debris, and tiny water creatures half-buried in their muddy homes. It was a damp and ghostly atmosphere that enveloped the tiny inlet, and the dampness weighed down the leaves and bushes that grew along the edge of the bank.

The lambent light that had begun to creep over the water caught the swiftness of the flight of the fish hawk as it whirled past a half-sunken log that jutted out from the shore. The steel-cast bird was fierce in its attack and plunged desperately into the water with its wings thrashing wildly. The shrill cry that escaped between its sharp beak seemed to awaken the lull between twilight and day. The huge bird ascended again into the light wind and, looping skillfully backward, expertly captured its prize and sailed off across the water. As if by magic, the cove suddenly came to life—the light fog swiftly passed, and a day of blue skies and blueish-green water emerged.

From the topmost part of the bank, Jess had watched with secret admiration the flight of the fish hawk. The familiar tremor and sensation moved throughout his thin body.

"Swim swiftly, little fishie, swim swiftly," he chanted—but even then he knew the bird had captured a tasty snack. "It is the way of the creature," the boy reasoned, but it was a way that almost frightened him and held him in awe. He only knew that the strength of the bird must be the greatest strength in the world.

It was going to be another hot summer day. One could tell by the way the flies and other tiny buzzing insects hovered about the shoreline. Jess watched them with a grin.

"A whole little world to yourself . . . you got down there," he said.

Like clowns capering in a sawdust ring, the specks darted and whizzed through sticky weeds

implanted in sticky sand. The sun beat down upon the cove now, setting everything glistening with an unusual brilliance.

"An enchanted land, all to myself," the boy whispered, "all to myself . . . just me. I am the king of this isle," he shouted. "Make way for the king!"

The king pompously made his way down the side of the bank and stepped barefooted upon the sticky carpet of sand before him. With an olive-green reed in his hand, he strode forward—leaving long and odd looking footprints behind him. The cattails and out-stretching bushes bowed at his touch.

"I now knight you in the name of his majesty, who has indeed recognized your faithful service," the king stoutly said.

The reed touched a cracked and muddy bottle that had been swept to the shore during a recent storm and had since moved in and out on the rising and falling of the tide. Tomorrow it would adorn another shore.

"How about knighting that skiff over, Your Majesty?" a voice suddenly said.

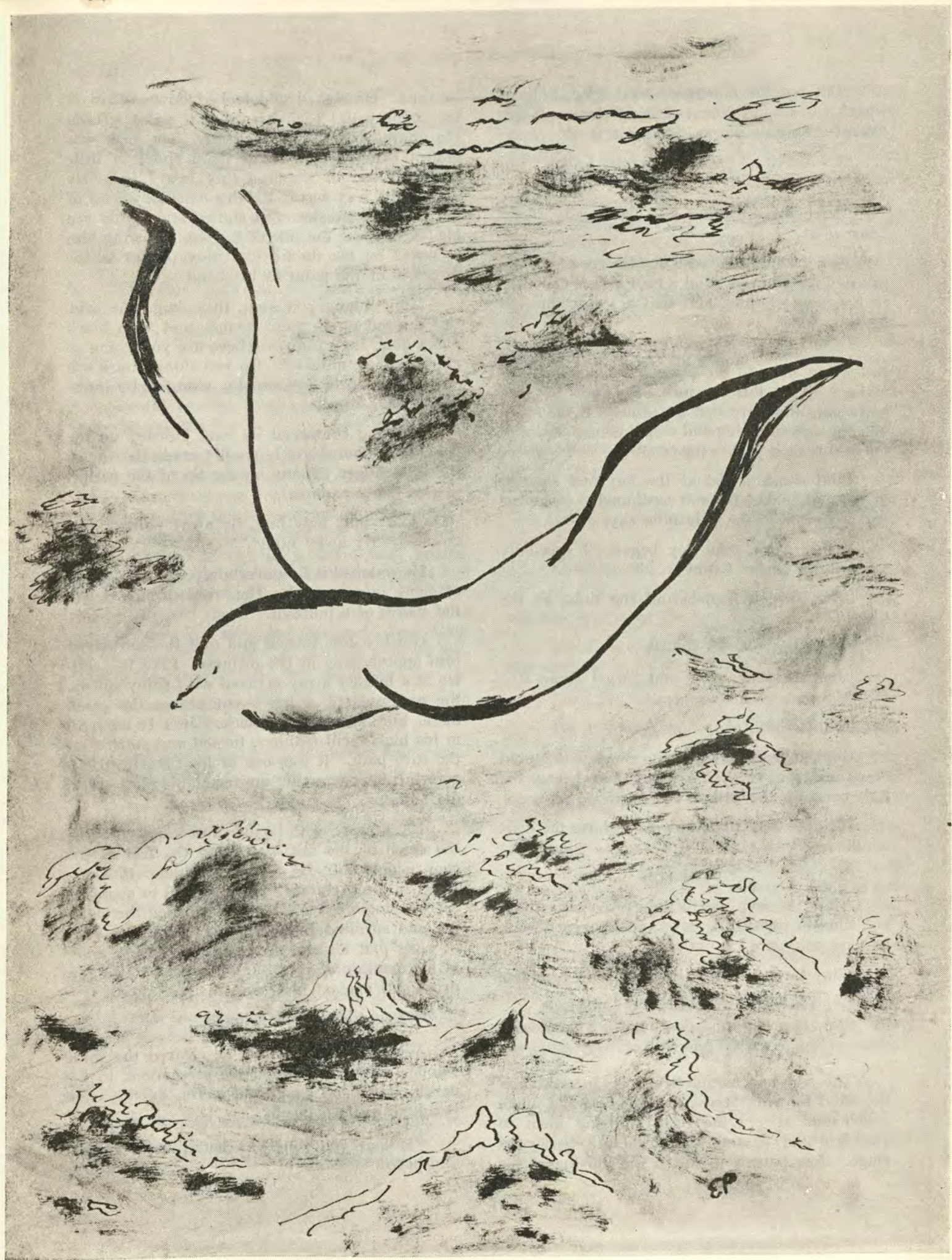
Jess turned abruptly and saw the intruder make a low mocking bow in his direction. The sunlight streamed through the trees and shone directly on the laughing face of a stocky, well built individual in early manhood. The figure sat down on the bank, buried his face in his hands and roared with a laughter that shook his body.

"Your Majesty," he choked, "Your Majesty!" Again he fell into a mirth comparable only to the humorous distress of one being tickled by a feather.

Standing silently with the reed still pointed in the direction of the bottle, Jess recovered from his numbness and apparent shock at being spied upon. A smile spread over his light, freckly features.

"Hey Clint, I'm king of this isle, all of it—the water, the sky, the trees—everything!" He waved his hands wildly. "You may be the next to be knighted," he exclaimed joyfully.

With a quick stride, the boy moved up the bank only to be stopped short by the fast movement of Clint as he jumped up unexpectedly. A darkness passed over his face, and his laughter subsided.



"Cut out the nonsense, Jess! King, king of what? A stupid dream world," he exploded. "What a dummy you are! What a d—"

"Clint, Clint," the boy fearfully began, "You shouldn't say . . ."

"Say what?" came the challenging reply. "Say what?"

Jess dropped the reed to the ground. The sun had gone in now, and a cool breeze penetrated his loose clothing and sent a shiver through his thin limbs.

"Enough's enough," Clint continued. "I sent you down here to do some work so's we can make a living this summer. We gotta live, we gotta eat, and here you are almost a man and playing—playing king and stupid enough to think I'd dream such junk with you!"

Clint shook a fist at the boy and shouted louder and louder. The sun continued to disappear and reappear in the pale blue sky.

"Clint, Clint," the boy began. "I was only pretending; honest I won't. . ."

"Aw, Jess, it happens all the time, all the time."

"But Clint. . ."

"Just do your work and forget about it—okay?"

"Okay, Clint, okay."

Clint turned and wiped the sweat that poured down his face with his hand, and began the trek back up the path.

"Clint?" Jess' thin voice rose above the light wind.

"Yeah?"

"Clint, I mean—well, didn't you ever think you kind of owned the cove and—I mean—well, pretend you were king of it?"

Clint turned and faced Jess with complete bewilderment upon his face.

"No, Jess boy, no—don't guess I ever did."

* * * *

The sun had completely gone in now, and the wind blowing across the water turned much cooler and stirred the reeds, moving them to and fro like lissome dancers on a barely lit stage. Jess paused to watch the moving of the

heavens. He sighed and looked down again at the coppery tint each brushful of paint left on the uneven bottom of the skiff. The task was almost completed, and his hand shook a little as he paused to watch a tiny insect tediously making its way across the dry expanse ahead of the wet, dull streaks. Jess smiled and gently ran his finger along the side of the bug, allowing him to crawl on his thumb and move along in the direction of the palm of his hand.

"How funny you look, little bug," he said, "all dressed up in your orange coat with black polka dots. How funny—where are you going so quickly . . . so quickly? Do you think you own part of the world, too, moving along so business-like?"

The bug continued its long journey up the palm of his hand and hurriedly made its way to the little finger. There, on the tip of the nail, it paused for a moment.

"Lady bug, lady bug, fly away home," Jess crooned, "fly away home."

He watched it fly uncertainly toward a patch of dense undergrowth. The wind carried it like the spores of a puffball.

Quickly Jess turned and saw the shower of rain approaching in the distance. Like the clatter of a mighty army arrayed with shiny spears, the accumulated drops swept across the creek in a line formation attack. Jess laughed in his high shrill manner, turned and started up the cove path. It was one of his favorite tricks—trying to outrun the unpredictable showers to his house.

He ran fast, with bounds and leaps, enjoying the smell of the salt water and the feel of the cool rising wind. He side-tracked the path sometimes to jump clumps of bushes and to swing at the swaying weeds. At last he reached the clearing and sprinted through the young green slips of corn that already seemed to be heads taller at the mention of rain. Jess ran faster as a few drops fell against his face.

"Caught again," he grinned.

With a mighty bound, he cleared the three wooden steps and opened the screendoor to the porch. It banged again and again, as the wind began to swirl playfully.

"Is that you son?" a small voice almost whispered.

"Yeah Ma, it's me."

The boy pressed his wet face against the screen and watched the rain pour down upon the world in tremendous bursts. Then a steady shower began.

"Jess, you come in out of the wet now," the small voice pleaded, "and call your father to come in too."

"Oh, for God's sake!" Clint's rough voice shouted.

"Clint, don't you go talking like that now. Jess?"

"I'm coming now, Ma," he answered. "Oh, you should see the rain coming down in such a lordly fashion."

Jess entered the tiny kitchen, stuffy and sticky from the dampness. In the corner by a wood stove where a fire smoldered sat a small woman smiling faintly and encumbered with a large white lace shawl. Her tiny head was covered with hair almost gray, but a faint yellowish touch led one to believe that years ago it had been adorned by light, golden curls. The face was small and shrunken, with large blurry blue eyes set deep in a wrinkled forehead. Jess clasped her small thin hand that showed signs of toil, with large blueish veins that stood out.

"Come Mother, come to the window and see the rain falling so pretty like," Jess said.

Clint turned suddenly, his hands submerged in a basin of water.

"Jess, Jess," he interrupted, "did you take care of the boat—the paint, and brushes and stuff?"

The silence was depressing.

"Well, did you?" he shouted.

"Clint I—Clint, I forgot."

"Oh God."

With dark eyes flashing, Clint grabbed the towel from the rack, hastily dried his hands, and started toward the door.

"Wait, Clint, I'll see to it," Jess said. "I'll take care of it!"

But already Clint had started running toward the cove. Jess ran out on the porch and looked out through the dirty screenwire at the

mud and the water that splashed up behind the boots of the retreating figure. With a mighty swing, he hit the beam of the porch and, hanging his head, walked back into the house.

* * * *

The evening light floated through the kitchen window, carrying the smell of fresh and living things. Jess sat under the window whistling a happy tune as he shined Clint's big boots.

"Has your father come in yet, Jess?" the wistful voice said.

"No, Ma," he answered without looking up. "Remember he's been gone a long time now—remember?"

"Oh, land sakes, I remember—he left me at the dance. I'll never forget that dance, all those people dancing and swaying to that beautiful music."

She twisted her small body in a jerky motion. Jess looked up and smiled, and then returned to his work.

"Dancing and swaying," she repeated.

Clint stepped unnoticed on the porch and squinted out over the wet land.

"Did I ever tell you about that dance, son?" she continued.

"Sure, Ma," he answered. "Sure you did."

"Oh, I haven't told you?" she said, puzzled.

Fingering her shawl, she went hurriedly but dreamily on filling the kitchen with romantic couples, big bowls of punch, and violin music.

"Lands, I was a young girl then," she said, her blue eyes sparkling. "Your father was so big and handsome—now mind you, not that he isn't handsome today. Oh, I do wish he'd come in out of the wet. Where is he?" she went on again. "Call your father in, Jess, like a good boy."

The boy looked up undisturbed. "Sure, Ma, sure, in a little while," he replied.

A shadow fell across the doorway and Clint stood there defiantly—his hands on his hips. His features were clouded and distorted, and he spoke thickly.

"Call your father, Jess," he mimicked. "Call your father!"

"Clint, for gosh sakes . . ." Jess murmured softly, "keep quiet."

"I'm not keeping quiet; I'm sick and tired of this! You're as bad as she is," he said pointing at the bewildered, wide-eyed figure. "You know as well as I do that—"

"Shut up, Clint!"

Jess shouted now. He rose up from the floor and the boots dropped with a dull thud.

"Shut up," he repeated, pronouncing the two words clearly and forcibly.

"You and your stupid dreams," Clint went on. "Both of you and your stupid dreams!"

The tiny woman retreated in the corner of the kitchen, clutching her shawl tightly about her throat. Jess looked straight ahead—motionless.

"Why do you have to agree, Jess—why?" Clint tried to reason. He stretched forth his hands in an appeal, then dropped them to his side. "Just agree and dream, dream, dream—both of you," he said hoarsely. His head dropped on his arm, and he leaned breathlessly against the door.

A strong river breeze came in the window, foretelling the rising of the tide. It blew through the golden curls that clustered about Jess' head and touched broad shoulders that were tense and taut.

"Come away from the window, son," his mother said, moving toward the boy. "It's almost time for supper."

A faint smile crossed her lips and she looked into a face that remained motionless and stared directly at Clint.

"Come, dear," she said, gently touching his arm. "Go out and ring the supper bell for me, please. Hurry now, it's almost time."

Jess nodded and started toward the doorway. Clint whirled suddenly and caught the boy squarely on the side of his face. "Ring the bell, Jess—what bell, what bell, what bell?" he screamed.

Jess scrambled off the floor and his hands flew up to his face. He bit his lip and came in swinging strongly but wildly. Clint's second blow found its way through his weak guard and landed directly below his left eye. Blood appeared from the small skin opening on the side of his

smooth face. He didn't utter a word and frantically searched for Clint's shoulders, digging into the flesh with the anger of a mad dog. Clint grunted, swore, and swung again.

Suddenly the two figures froze in motion, as their eyes caught sight of the crumbling of the small frightened figure in the corner. She fell to the floor without a sound, like a withered yellow leaf falling from an almost bare tree in autumn. Quickly they rushed to the side of the tiny woman. Clint gently picked her up and carried her to the great, massive bed that dominated a tiny drab room. It was like picking up a baby sparrow that had fallen from its mother's nest. The boys bent anxiously over the wasted figure.

"Mother, Mother," Clint anxiously whispered.

The eyes fluttered open. "Now never you mind, son, you were right—Father isn't here today, is he?" she said.

Clint choked and looked away. The time had come for him to speak, but they were difficult words to say.

"He isn't here today, is he?" she repeated.

Clint took a deep breath and gently kissed her silvery hair. "No, Ma, he isn't here today, but it's all right," he went hurriedly on. "He's never forgotten you... that I know."

Her face lit up. "You don't think so?"

"No, Ma, he still remembers you," he paused to catch his breath, "just as pretty as you were the night of the dance."

A bright smile held his attention to her next words. "He told me how pretty I was that night." She sighed and closed her eyes.

Clint moved into the hall, pausing to touch Jess' shoulder. He looked deeply into the boy's puffed eyes in such a way as to say, "I understand now, Jess boy, I do." Clint dropped his head, and fumbled to clasp the boy's long bony fingers in his thick, strong ones. "Jess boy, I understand... I do understand." Clint passed by the boy and moved toward the telephone.

"Operator, get me Doctor Bruce," he said shakingly. "Yeah, Martha, ring him up for me. It's Ma... she's in a bad way. Hurry!"

* * * *

The figure stirred again. "Who's out there, son?"

"Just the Doctor, Ma. He coming to make you feel better," Jess answered. "Lie still now."

"Oh, I feel good. Don't you go bothering yourself now for me."

"It's all right Ma, just lie still."

"He's coming in now, Jess," Clint said.

Jess nodded and pressed the thin hand. "I'm going to wait outside now, Ma." He moved away from the bed.

"Jess?" the small voice shook and then steadied itself. The boy moved quickly to her side. "Jess, they're not all dreams, and those that are dreams are pretty ones. Remember, Jess, dream pretty dreams. They're always the best kind to dream. Hear me, son?"

"Yes, Ma," he smiled, "I hear . . . always pretty ones—pretty ones of you."

The blue eyes danced and the hands stretched out to touch the swollen cheek of the boy. "Always my good boy . . . always my good boy," she whispered. "Pretty dreams are the best ones . . . always dream those kind . . . just those kind."

Her breathing was faintly audible now and came in quick, short gasps.

* * * *

The cove and the path that ran irregularly up the bank were now hidden in shadows much darker than those slowly creeping across the water. The evening breeze stirred up the smooth surface, sending in rushes that rattled the crackly reeds and disturbed the fiddlers as they scuttled to and fro anxious to bury themselves in their soft, muddy homes. The land and the water seemed to be coated with an unusual silvery brilliance. It was hard to determine where one met the other. The silence hung like a wet mantle about the shore.

Suddenly a harsh sound broke through the silence as a fish hawk swooped down upon an unsuspecting fish. Jess quickly jerked his head toward the scene of the struggle. The thin light that shone from the half-starved moon revealed the anguish on the boy's thin, angular face. The dampness pressed his matted hair across his forehead. His swollen eyes sought out the struggle

through tears that persistently blurred the vision before him.

"You hateful old bird," he screamed hoarsely. "I hope you drop it, drop it, drop it;"

Jess fell back against the wet moss, his head buried in its spongy coolness, and his hands frantically attempted to grab the sticky sand that stretched out before him. Again and again he threw his long body against the earth. Somewhere in the distance the fish hawk glided away carrying the silvery squirming captive clutched in its claws.

"Is that you, Jess?" a voice rang out.

Jess suddenly felt his body go rigid; his breathing almost ceased.

"Jess, you out there. Answer me; Jess?"

The boy rubbed his hand across his face and sat up. "Yeah, Clint, I'm here;"

"Come on to the house then. Please come to the house, Jess boy."

Jess stood full height now, his hands clenched at his side.

"Your hear now, Jess? Come on, boy, we're waiting for you. You hear now?"

"I hear, I hear," the boy almost whispered.

Clint moved away, careful to avoid coming in too close contact with him.

Jess paused and turned his face toward the water. The wind had died down now, and all was quiet except the croakers who had begun their nightly melodic serenade. Jess took a step forward and stopped short. The impression Clint's boots had made in the mud still remained. He lifted his leg and brought his foot down into the impression.

"It's big," he thought, "but someday it will fit—it's got to;"

He turned once again, this time with tears that glided silently down the grim and determined face of a young warrior.

"And the dreams," he whispered, "and the dreams—I won't ever forget them, ever . . . all the pretty ones."

The moon that had escaped the entanglement of the trees dispelled the shadows about him as he made his way back up the path.

"Oh yes, I know—she's just a little goldbrick. Too precious for me to touch," complained Uncle Al.

If Uncle Al only knew Trixie as I know her he would never think that of her and would be satisfied to leave her alone. People who don't see much of Trixie know only her sweetness because she really can be very winsome in front of company. But now as we stand in Grandma's front yard—I mean the yard in front of Grandma's house—all these thoughts flicker through my mind like the moving pictures on a movie screen.

SUCH DEVOTED SISTERS

That win 'em-all-over-to-my-side smile Trixie has on her face now is very much the same as the one she had on the day my two calico kittens disappeared. I can well remember not seeing my pets tumble around the house and searching for them all day. At the supper table I asked my daddy if he had seen them.

At the question Trixie looked up from her hotdog loaded with junk and said in a superior tone—"Oh, Fluffy and Tuffy? I know where they are."

Jumping down from her place, she came around the table, grabbed my hand, and off we went to find the kittens. She led me to the shed in the back of the barn and to a rusty and battered milk can. Then she stopped.

"Trixie, where are my kittens?" I demanded.

"In there," she replied, pointing at the milk can, and on her face was that I-didn't-know-what-I-was-doing smile.

WOMEN ORATORS

(or Leave the Stages to the Sages)

Oh begorra for the galores of women orators
Those feminine Demosthenes,
Who have left the scene of their cuisine
To succumb
To the rostrum.

The spinsters discourse on divorce
Or opine on "Your Child and Mine,"
While exploiters of psychosomatic relations
Resemble mental cases.

So ladies, if you must lecture, be glib over the crib
Or over tea with your coterie,
But spare us your oration in convocation
And your apothegmy
In assembly.

Needless to say, my kittens were dead.

There was the misty winter day that I brought my little baby chick, Peep, into the house from the cold of the henhouse to the warmth of our kitchen fire. Very pleadingly, Trixie asked to hold Peep, so with a generous feeling, I put my downy yellow chick into her grubby little paws. In her excitement not to let him escape, she reduced little Peep to an eternally still little ball of down. As she handed the remains back to me, on her face was that you-know-I-didn't-mean-to-do-it smile.

Elizabeth Peters

Finally, I remember the day Trixie and I were asked to carry in wood and I was lazy and didn't go to do it. Trixie became very mad because I wouldn't help. As I sat reading a book, Trixie came into the room and wham! she hit me over the head with her toy banjo. It hurt me, but as I sat there with tears streaming down my cheeks, the devilish Trixie put her arms around my neck and gave me an oh-sister-I-love-you smile.

Despite her devilish and mischievous ways, Trixie is lovable. When my temper is stretched to the breaking point, she'll smile one of her irresistible smiles and I'll end up forgiving her for what she has done. She's good and bad, goldbrick and hoptoad, but above all else, she's a little girl and my baby sister.

—Annie Lee Jernigan

The time was early Sunday morning, the setting a narrow rut-ridden road bordered by the remnants of an antiquated canal. A new two-toned green Chevrolet sped down the secluded road, swaying and swerving as it hit each bump. Inside the car were four teenagers. In front were Hank, the owner, sporting a devil-may-care lack of concern, and, beside him, Susie, an attractive girl of about sixteen. Flashing brown eyes, windblown chestnut hair, and a spirit charged with electricity were consonant with the unleashed fury with which she handled the car. Obviously she didn't know how to drive; yet she sat confidently, almost defiantly behind the wheel. In the back seat, sprawled out to

make room for his gangling legs, was Jack making the sour comments of a sophisticated nineteen year old. Beside Jack I sat bolt upright, filled with nervous excitement—the kind of excitement that finds you laughing hysterically as the sweat forms little droplets on your hands, then suddenly, if you don't nurse it along, leaves you feeling numb and empty. I wanted to believe I was the liveliest of the group, that I cared the least, dared the most, and sought the most excitement—excitement and gaiety, the reason for living.

As we sped recklessly along I found myself philosophizing lightly. Life was great as long as you lived it at a fast pace. It was like jumping on a trampoline; you just kept bouncing up and down, with each bounce a little more dangerous and thrilling, but always there was the soft padded canvas to come down to, so why worry? Why worry about anything?

My thoughts were disrupted by the others. The ceiling light was blinking off and on every time we

hit a bump. Hank complained that his "ole man" would probably blame him for the faulty condition, and Sue added that it made her nervous. I thought the silly little thing was comical and remarked that Susie didn't have a license and couldn't drive anyway and then told Hank that he should consider himself an individual, since he had the only new car with a built in warning light.

This lightened the mood temporarily until Hank began cracking jokes about Roman Catholics to make Sue feel better about giving up the church. Hank disgust-

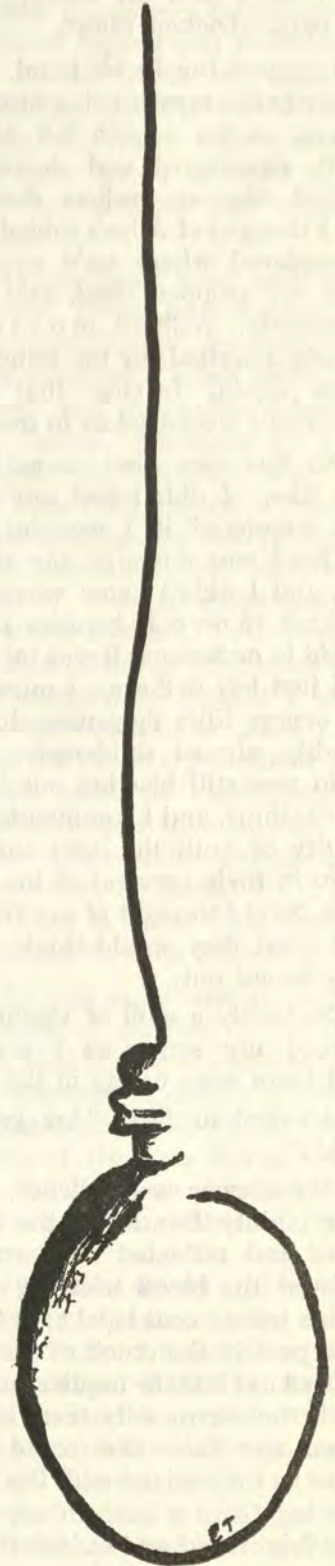
the light . by idie capron

ed me sometimes and bored me most of the time. I sat up and pressed my nose against the window. The old creek looked murky and mysterious with the little thin bridges of ice forming on it. I thought of the midnight swim parties we had celebrated on its banks just a few shorts months ago. Life was fun when there were parties and people were happy, and tonight was filled with fun and happiness. I could feel the rhythm of the hot rock and roll music as it screamed out "Let's Rip it Up Tonight!" The music made us feel wild and free. Susie pressed harder on the gas pedal, and the engine reacted with roaring speed, faster, faster, faster, on to nowhere.

And then a jolt, panic, and the sound of bushes scratching the car. I thought of how Hank would complain about the scratches on his new car and wondered why dust was rising from the floor and if it would ruin the upholstery.

"I can't stop!" Susie yelled.

"Of course you can't. You've



got your foot on the gas!" Hank shrieked.

"I can't find the brake," was her panic-stricken retort.

I groped for Jack's hand, then suddenly felt myself being tumbled around as the vehicle fell downward, downward and down. It seemed like an endless descent, and I thought of Alice's fabled fall. I wondered where we'd end up. Then we stopped dead, still and completely. Without moving a muscle, I waited for the falling to begin again, fearing that any movement would set us in motion.

So this was what an accident was like. I didn't feel any pain and wondered if I was injured. My head was down on my shoulder, and I didn't know whether I couldn't move it because I was afraid to or because it was injured, so I just left it there. I mused at the ornery little light now shining steadily, almost stubbornly. The radio was still blasting out feverish rhythms, and I commended the quality of both the light and the radio in their survival of the accident. Next I thought of my friends and what they would think when they found out.

Suddenly a chill of virgin fear pierced my senses as I realized that there were others in the car.

I called to Jack, "Are you all right?"

My answer was a silence. The light plainly illuminated the wholeness and reflected with strange eeriness the blood trickling down Jack's trench coat lapel as it formed a pool in the crook of his arm. I dared not look or inquire further. I felt the warm salty tears stream down my face and could taste them as they mixed with the blood flowing from a gash in my lip. I was frightened and confused. This wasn't the way life was supposed to be. I asked Susie how she felt, and she mumbled something about

still being my friend but that her stomach hurt. I looked at her and saw her eyes still flashing, but this time with terror, as she asked, "Janie, Janie, my face, tell me it isn't ruined!"

In the glare of that now horrible light I could see a black space where her front teeth had been. I said nothing as we sat sobbing and shivering in the cold of the night. Hank slouched where he had been thrown, shaking his head in disbelief and mumbling incoherently about his father's new car—his beautiful new car! Somehow I couldn't help blaming myself for the whole situation. If I hadn't come tonight Susie wouldn't have either and we wouldn't be here now. I cried silently, "Oh Lord, forgive me." That's it; I'll try prayer. I clasped my hands together in an almost forgotten habit. Folding my hands was as far as the habit took me though, for I was lost for words. Tears pouring over my face until their taste repulsed me.

Bewildered by my experience with prayer, I wondered why it had happened. I was the same person who as a child loved to recite bed-time prayers, but now when I really needed help I didn't know how to ask for it. Why? And why had all this happened to me?

I sought possible comfort in listening to the radio, but the music seemed different now; it seemed to mock us rather than to sympathize with our wild emotions. I wanted to drown out its taunts forever. Most of all I wanted to kick that glaring light bulb so I wouldn't have to face the reality of our folly. Because I could do neither, I just lay there imagining all sorts of things. I imagined lying there forever watching my friends suffer and die. I trembled with every trickle of water that flowed in through the bend in the door and wondered what it would be

like to drown. At least the water would snuff out that infernal light. Slowly desolation crept over me, numbing thousands of receptive nerves. There was no hope. I felt as forsaken as the old canal into which the car had plunged.

I must have slipped off into unconsciousness then, for the next thing I remembered was the voice of an intern as he disinterestedly listed my injuries: "Dorsal slipped disc, lumbar fracture, left tibia fracture, head concussions. Another reckless teenager. Won't they ever learn?"

I wanted to sit up and scream, "No, No! I'm not just one of those. I wasn't doing it to be bad. I just wanted to be happy. I didn't mean it, honest."

But I couldn't sit up, nor could I scream. I was bound by a cast and by the truth that I had been a reckless teenager whether I'd meant to be or not. All I could do now was to lie in this monster of plaster and gauze and reckon with what I had been in the past and what the future might hold. Perhaps it was about time I did some critical thinking instead of reacting to ungoverned impulses. Now was the time to think. As I lay there the light stared down in my eyes.

I remembered the early years I'd spent in my grandmother's home, living a life of meticulous daily routine: to bed at seven, up at seven, all the family together at a certain time for every meal, plenty of time allotted for my lessons in reading and telling time. I relished these lessons as a way to gain praise and considered success in them as the only way to be a part of the adult world which surrounded me.

My grandmother's big house on Jordan Hill had rolling acres, riding stables, colored maids, heavily carpeted floors, and big, big doors with big, big latches. On the whole the house offered all the security a

child needed; yet I felt as if I didn't belong. Day after day I was haunted by loneliness as I roamed and rattled through and around the spacious rooms and never-ending hallways. Most of the time I only wandered through the big house in hopes of finding Hattie. Hattie, who to most people was just a big, old colored maid with a pleasing smile, was much more to me. She had the biggest and the brownest, the most beautiful smile in the world; she was my friend. I would revel in happiness each time she'd pick me up and bellow, "Lands, chile, what's you doing?" Then she'd hug me tenderly whether I'd done my lessons well or not.

My thoughts turned to my grandmother, a devoutly religious woman whose many rituals and utterances I had never understood. As a child I concluded that she must be very saintly because I couldn't understand her. Religion to me then was something you either observed silently or recited passages about, but never tried to understand. I remembered Grandpa Doc, by profession a dentist who practiced hypnosis, but to me a scary magician I only talked to when Grandma gave the signal that he was in a receptive mood. Upon this signal I would climb on his lap and bubble over with questions about his sleeping magic. Thus, at the age of six I was hypnotizing the few playmates I had, but soon lost as one by one their mothers discovered me. I did not mind this though, for getting rid of childish playmates was a big step towards entering the adult world which I thought I so desperately needed to be part of.

The light still glowed before my eyes, but I didn't mind now, for I wanted to think. I wanted to think back to when the court awarded me to my parents' custody. Formerly I had only known

them as infrequent visitors for whom I was allowed to show off. Things were always light and gay when they came to see us, but they never stayed long and I hardly knew them. Now that I was to live with these people, I had mixed emotions about leaving my grandmother's. I contemplated the promises of lots of parties, trips, and pretty clothes, and decided I might like to try it. Thinking about the two baby sisters I would be living with, I wondered whether they'd take to hypnotism.

I went with my parents, and the next two years were full of parties, trips, and pretty clothes. The five of us ate and slept whenever the desire moved us. We rarely went to church, for we were never in one place long enough. Most of the time life was exciting, but I sometimes missed the security of my grandmother's house, the long discussions with Grandpa Doc, and, most of all, the talks shared with Hattie. I felt lost here too. I was made fun of if I played baby games with my sisters and was called down for being "too big for my boots" if I tried to join in adult conversations.

The two short years of merry-making with my parents ended the day my sister Leslie was killed in an accident. Shortly after the funeral, my parents separated. My remaining sister Pat and I were sent to separate orphanages. How I hated that orphanage with its assembly line routines and cold-hearted matrons. Everybody around me seemed unhappy. I felt sorry for the other children, but still didn't want to play with them. I must have run away at least once a week until finally my parents reunited and took me back.

Everything was different now. We still moved from hotel to hotel like gypsies, but the tinge of gaiety had left our existence. I still hadn't found my world and unhappi-

ness plagued me. In the years that followed, I felt even more lost as I was passed from one relative to another. Sometimes thinking of the plight of Hansel and Gretel made me wonder if in my searching something dreadful would happen to me. Everyday I became more and more afraid to wake up and face the confusion that surrounded me.

At fourteen I went back to my parents. Things had changed even more than before. My parents argued constantly. I had three more sisters, and my father's business was failing. Furthermore I had changed my attitudes. For the first time I felt a spirit of rebellion—rebellion against everything: religion, education, and love, all of which I wanted desperately to grasp but couldn't. I felt resigned that I could never experience them with happiness. Instead I would have my happiness and forget them. I'd live every moment to its highest peak of excitement. I'd have more fun than anyone else, be the most carefree girl alive, and never worry or think. No, I must never stop to think. This would be the world I'd been searching for.

But now as I stared at the light, I wondered whether it had been right. Had it been a world of unreality destined to end in a mass of tangled steel swallowed in the icy waters of the Erie Barge Canal? Had the existence in this world been worth the outcome? As the light glared brighter somehow I knew I'd been wrong and I wanted to change. I squeezed the buzzer for the nurse. I wanted to talk to my minister. Maybe it was that haunting light that made me take stock of myself and change for the better. I'd never really know, but I wanted to believe it was so. I hoped that blessed light would be with me if I ever came to a crossroad in the long path that lay ahead.

TICONDEROGA No. 2 Gladys Lewis

Oh, here we go again! I can always tell when it's Monday once more. First thing I know, she snatches me up in a rush and out into the cold air we go. Like as not she's carrying me eraser-down till I'm dizzy. Then we're in class and I can get some moments of peace. That is until the professor comes in. Even then you never know. It may be one of those doodlin' days or one of those write-like-mad days. Believe me, this life of a pencil is not all you may think it is. Let me tell you a little about it.

I don't recall anything about my beginnings, but the box my cousins and I were placed in at the pencil factory said we came from a tree up north and that our "internal workings" was lead from another place. He didn't know much more, so that's all I can tell you about that period of my life. I wish I could remember—but then, I didn't even have my fine eraser-top at the time, so it probably wasn't a very exciting time anyway. Not long after that conversation with the box, several of my cousins with the same eraser and name (Ticonderoga No. 2) were lined up in a slender box and put into a large carton. When we next saw light, we were on display in a shop in a college town. Oh, that was an exciting time! Breathlessly we waited to see what our life's work would be. How nervous we were when that snappy lady looked us over. I was sure she'd pick me and I'd spend the rest of my lead-time scribbling grocery lists. But, as it happened, her little boy knocked down the stationery display and she left without buying any of us. Phew! What a relief! Days passed and one by one my cousins went to work, but there I lay. I was getting discouraged when at last, one Saturday afternoon, my former owner saw me and chose

me to go to the college to serve there. My, if those silly sports pencils could see me now! All that bragging when they were bought by the golf pro at the country club—humph!

My first sharpening was a surprise to me. I thought it would hurt but it didn't. In fact, I kinda' liked it. My former owner was on the campus newspaper and I had a grand time. I began by proofreading and marking the dummy. Once I even was borrowed by the associate editor for a sketch of the cartoon she was publishing that week. That very week though, my owner took me to an assembly and lost me on the way. Lost! What a terrible feeling. Neglected for almost three days, I survived an excruciatingly cold snow storm, a careless kick from a freshman late to class, and a fall down some steps. Luckily, that fall saved me, for it was then that my present owner picked me up and tucked me into her pocket. Maybe I don't worry 'bout deadlines like before and maybe I do get the news later now, but I like this work. I've learned so much. I've written themes, taken notes, voted for May Queen, won tic-tac-toe games, and even served as a foil in a mock duel! You can see they expect me to be a jack-of-all-trades. I sometimes wonder why I enjoy my life at all. I'm surely not publicly recognized. Oh, you'll hear about the "women behind the men," but did you ever listen to a speech about the pencil behind the playwright? No! So you see, the life of a pencil isn't as easy as you think.

Now my eraser is worn down, my lovely yellow casing is tooth-marked, and I'm just half my original size. If I last the semester out, I'm bound to get lost in the summer vacation packing rush. Ah, well, I guess it's worth it, 'though on Monday morning I sometimes wonder. . .

THE FLOOR

Linoleum squares, cold, lonely,
Lost in the crowd.
Individually
Smoothed and cut to conformity
To look the same
To obey, to bear the grime and hurrying feet—
Like city people.

— Pat Davis



It was nearing dusk. Soon it would be dark. Helen glanced at her watch and then looked uneasily out of the large picture window that faced their spacious back yard. She thought to herself how nice the flowers were doing this spring. Then her glance carried her mind over the hill and into the growing blackness of the woods beyond their yard. She looked again at her watch and said to herself, "I do wish Billy would come home. He is really too young to be out there by himself." She heard the front door open and close. Her husband was home.

Dan wasn't Billy's father. Bill had been killed in Germany during the war. It wasn't that Dan didn't like Billy, but he just couldn't seem to get close to him. Why just the other day Dan had told Billy not to bring his dirty old gun into the front room to clean. Billy had retorted, "Dad and I always cleaned our guns here, didn't we, Mom?" Nevertheless Billy had picked up his gun and had gone out on the back porch. Helen had gone out to see if he was all right when she heard him talking to King, the dog Bill gave him on his ninth birthday. That was four years ago. Billy and King went everywhere together. They hunted and fished and swam and took long solitary walks. King seemed almost to understand everything that Billy said to him.

Billy was saying, "What do we care what he says anyway? Someday you and I will go over that hill and we'll never come back. How's that sound, King, boy?" King had wagged his tail in agreement. Helen walked out on the porch and sat down next to her son.

"Billy, how about some cookies and milk before you go to bed?"

"OK Mom, could you bring them out here so King can have some too?"

Billy had gone to bed that night without so much as a word to Dan. Helen knew Dan had been hurt, but he hadn't said anything more about it.

When Dan came into the kitchen, he was carrying a long thin package. "Guess what, Helen? I got that new .22 to give Billy for his birthday. By the way, where is he? I'd like to give it to him now. It's time that boy and I were starting to be friends."

"I don't know. He and King were going hunting this afternoon and they haven't come back yet. Dan, I'm worried. He's never stayed out this late before. He left without lunch and I know he's hungry."

"Don't worry, Helen. That boy knows these woods backward and forward. He probably just misjudged the time and followed a trail too far. He'll be here soon."

Helen and Dan sat down to eat dinner. Helen was washing dishes when she heard a familiar scratch at the door. "King, where's Billy? Dan, come here! King's here, but Billy isn't with him."

The Gun

"Well, at least that dog has sense enough to come home when it's hungry. Don't worry. He'll be here. I think it's high time I had a talk with him. He shouldn't worry you so, and he's getting so disrespectful to me."

The evening passed by slowly for Helen. She kept remembering Billy's words to King. The dog wouldn't eat and he kept pacing from Helen to the door. Finally Dan said, "Put that dog out. He is driving me crazy."

Helen got up and went to the door. She took Dan's jacket from the hook and followed King into the darkness of the night. The dog took the lead and Helen followed closely behind him. She tore her slacks and scratched her legs on a briar bush. As they went deeper into the dark woods, she began to feel apprehensive and a sudden cold chill went through her. She started to call Billy's name. Over and over she called until her voice was barely a whisper, but no one answered.

Suddenly a voice rang out, "If that's you, Dan Morris, don't come one step closer. I can see your jacket in the light!" Helen tried to call, but her voice was a whisper. She started to run to him; a shot rang out and Helen fell into a crumpled heap on the soft ground.

Later that night, King again led a party into the forest. Dan and the other men found Helen's and Billy's bodies lying together in the woods. Dan knelt down and patted King's head, "Well, King, I guess Billy won't need this now." And he threw the new .22 rifle into a near-by stream.

—BY MARY BETH HARWLEY

DOUBT

Doubt: tangled briar-root
That twists through one's mind—
And gnarls and knots the troubled thought,
Until all hope is strangled out,
And only helpless dreams entwine.

FOR HIM

Lustrous shells and sands
Of time—symbolic
Aeons of wait
For a dream and a wish,
Whatever the shore—
Any sea—

Forever we walk
Scanning
Only horizons we see.
Wishing for dreams,
Frightened in realities,
Yet constant in heart.

BITTERSWEET

The soul is not scarred—
But the wound is there.
The heart is not deceived—
But the dart is there.
The windows are closed—
But love is there.

FAERY TALE

With one fell swoop
He cut the throat
Of the villain fair.

Then with his knife
He cut three locks
Of her blanched stray hair.

"Three locks, three snakes—

Who cares?" he cried,
And tucked them in his vest.

Alas, Alack—

The snakes bit back,
So ends our story rare.

SLUMS

Will every dream stop dreaming?
 From street corner to street corner
 I walk among the broken souls of houses
 Once new.
 Could well walk from death to death.

STORM

And where is today taking us?
 Into yesterday? Tomorrow's nowhere.
 (Look out, the evergreens —)
 Life boils up and . . .
 (Have pinecones on them)
 Who was it anyway?
 That all my life happened to?

IRONY

Cruel words spoken today,
 Purposeful in rage,
 Are not so cruel
 As words . . .
 As words spoken at random
 Gaily on a clovered hill
 On a summer yesterday.

CAROLUS

She laughed at me.
 I knew it was no laugh, really,
 But life's excitement, overpowering her,
 Yet, I vibrated,
 Like a plucked string,
 Soundlessly.

The crowd surged around me as I stepped into the bus station. My eyes traveled the length and breadth of the waiting room. "Just like every other stop on this route," I thought to myself.

There were the familiar steel gray parcel lockers occupying one half of the space of a wall. Behind a frame and glass structure jutting out into the room ambled a stocky, bespectacled agent scrawling out destinations of travelers on long yellow forms and perfunctorily accepting bills in exchange. There were the usual two or three passengers clustered about the windows, nervously toying with weekend bags and brief cases, awaiting a turn to question the arrival or departure of an expected bus.

On the far side of the area an assortment of magazines and newspapers appealing to the gamut of possible reader interests screamed out from behind retaining racks. A refreshment center next to the stand pleaded for patronage, emitting the aroma of coffee brewing and hamburgers sizzling on the grill. Two waitresses in starched blue and white, flitted behind the counter bobbing back and forth between customers and cash register.

Three rows of veneered benches spread directly before me were occupied by the customary heterogeneous lot of passengers, wearing the countenances of fatigue in varying degrees. I slipped into a seat at the end of one row and began scanning a newspaper which I found lying in the vacant adjacent section. Conscious of the steady gaze of someone standing in front of me, I glanced up into the face of a very small boy.

His cheeks and forehead were grimy; his once blond hair was tousled and hung over his jacket collar in the back. He wore a much-faded red plaid shirt which revealed itself as his soiled blue denim jacket gaped open for lack of buttons. His jeans were crusty with mud and ragged beyond repair. From the size of the holes in his shoes and the fact that he wore no socks, I would dare say he received little benefit from the flopping soles beneath him in the freezing December weather.

The boy couldn't have been more than seven or eight, though under such circumstances, chronological reasonings are often misleading. A slow smile broke and spread across the child's face, disclosing a row of disease-blackened teeth,

one further evidence of the neglect written all over his small form.

As I returned his smiling friendliness and reached for my purse and some chewing gum to offer him, he suddenly lowered his head in an afterthought of timidity and galloped cowboy fashion down the row, vanishing from my sight.

In a few minutes I noticed him again now gripping tightly in one hand a brown paper bag. Clutching this, he frolicked over to the seat diagonally opposite mine, edged himself into the space and, having caressed the sack against his cheek several times, opened it carefully. He fumbled with the contents, hidden from my vision, all the while humming very softly to himself.

At length he produced a shiny, silver toy pistol. He stuck one finger through the trigger loop and began twirling the gun in the air. A few minutes more he spent in close examination of the weapon, his lips pursed in a whistle, the sound barely audible.

Satisfied now with the worth of his firearm, the youngster scooted down from the seat, thrust the empty paper bag underneath his left arm and darted down the row, brandishing a clicking pistol as he went. The young range rider startled a man wearing a gray tweed coat standing in his path. With a "Stick 'em up! Hey! I said stick 'em up!" the boy continued on to the door leading to the street, burst through it and was gone.

"Little fellow's having a good time," commented one grandfatherly gentleman seated three spaces from me.

"Young ruffians, I call 'em . . . trouble makers later on," replied his partner, mechanically flicking cigarette ashes on the floor.

The station agent's voice boomed out announcement of my awaited departure. I rose, picked up my belongings, and headed for the throng which I could see gathering at the loading platform.

My thoughts were interrupted suddenly by a woman's voice rising above the general din and commotion. "But are you sure you left your package here, Steven?" A woman wearing a luxurious fur coat was addressing a small boy, handsomely attired, whose face showed deepest distress.

"Yes, Steven, you did," I inwardly volunteered and, turning toward the door, made my exit with the other travelers.

The Game

Annie Lee Jernigan

The light from the ceiling struck the dirty front of the cards and spilled into the faces of the two players. In the light their faces were set in cold masks of determination. They had been playing since morning and they were tired, but they could not stop. The stakes were too high. The only sounds in the room were the monotonous flip of card against card and the weary voices of the players.

"And raise you South America."

The voices droned on. The stakes were unbelievably high. The world was the pot. Control of all the continents would go to the winner.

This game was to be the last attempt for peace, for earlier endeavors had failed. The essay contest which had urged entries in twenty-five words or less on "How to Win Peace and Influence Diplomats" had ended badly. Entries from many countries offering many suggestions and solutions had poured in. Some had given good ideas such as "Everybody Should Be a Christian Because Christianity Is 1,958 Years Old and

Buddhism Is Only 2,521 Years Old" or "Everybody Should Destroy Their Weapons But You Go First." The winner, however, had been a peasant who had submitted "Why I Am Happy I Am Not a Capitalist Slave," but he was unable to appear to accept the prize because they would not let him out of his country. He had no shoes to wear anyway. Finally the game had been suggested as the only solution.

The players were exhausted now. Although the game had been touch and go earlier, everyone could see that the final hand was being played. One by one the continent chips had been shoved into the center of the table. The final play:

"Raise you Africa and call."

"Four aces."

The other's hands shook as his cards dropped to the floor. His face was pale as he staggered to his feet. Although he had lost, there was nothing he could do now. He doubted if the other had played fairly, but he was too tired to protest. He started toward the door, but before he reached it his shoulders straightened and he turned to face his opponent. Fire came into his eyes and defiance into his voice as he said:

"And who will own the moon?"

PATTERN

Side by side row after row but they
Try to tell you they are not alike
For every second one has a dormer
And the third one a side porch.
Still the mailboxes are side by side
Row after row except on Tuesdays and
Fridays when they are joined by the
Garbage cans and in the back oil
Tanks stand like barbs on a wire
Fence. Am I myself or a neighbor?
God! Sometimes I think I will smother.

— Annie Lee Jernigan

The wind rose to its height now. Upon it rode great masses of snow that swirled about the air like large unguided white phantoms. The sky was gray, showing here and there thin streaks of white that stood livid against the dull background. Gloom pressed heavily down upon the scene. The flakes gradually decreased in number. A penetrating rain slowly began to set in.

The boy buttoned his coat more tightly about his wet neck. The wind whipped past him swiftly, carrying rain that dashed against his face and ran in small, irregular lines down his smooth cheeks. Like damp, tangled seaweed left stranded upon the shore during low tide, his matted brown hair lay plastered against his high, sticky forehead. Heavy, dark lashes fringed eyes that glanced about in horror and disbelief. A mighty blast of wind sent a torrent of rain mixed with salt water that almost completely engulfed his tall, lanky frame. In complete desperation he watched the shoreline disappear again and again from view. Quickly he wiped the bitter taste of the salt water from his lips with the back of his hand.

"Hello Jim," a voice rang out.

The boy moved eagerly forward.

"Yes sir," he shouted. "You coming back here now, sir—the storm is getting . . ."

"Coming now," the voice broke in. "Stay there and keep your eye on that rope. Don't let it break loose!"

Captain Andrew loomed into sight. He was a tall man, arrayed in slickers and large gum boots that thumped loudly as he walked. His face seemed small and almost child-like, encumbered with a slick oil skin hat that had spread wide its flaps in the wind. His blue eyes were set wide apart and connected by an excessively heavy growth of eyebrows. The drops of rain fell against his swarthy, weather-beaten face lined with wrinkles and tiny creases. His teeth were short and covered with a brownish tinge. His short, stubby hands worked deftly as he handled the rigging.

"Have you ever seen such a beautiful sight?" he roared. "A magnificent sight."

"Sir?" the boy murmured quizzically.

"Aw, Jim, you can see it, can't you? All around you. The feel of the cold rain beating on you, the taste of that salt spray, the creaking and the groaning of those old sails above us—that's enough to make a man feel good. Yes sir, it makes a man feel big and strong with all the world looking right up at him."

The boy looked up at the dirty dull sails—the yards and yards of them billowing above him and connected with hundreds of gnarled ropes that swung lifelessly from the great mast. He saw no beauty and felt no surge of emotion. He shivered from the penetrating rain.

The captain sensed his thoughts.

"Why, Jim, it's a man's strength . . . a man's got to have a strength." He waved his hand about him and smiled.

"A man's strength?" Jim said slowly.

The captain grinned and bit off a hunk of chewing tobacco.

"Guess that's a funny way of puttin' it. Not too good, me puttin' my thoughts into good words, but what I mean is a man's strength is knowing that he's finally got something to call his own, something he loves to watch grow and something he loves to work with. Like this here schooner, the old Mary E.—all my life I dreamed of having a schooner like this and running cargo over the river. It's all I ever wanted to do. And here it is." He laughed, "Like I told Bertha, it's my life and my strength."

He turned and spat into the river. The rain turned into a slow drizzle.

"Captain Andrew?" the boy began. He stopped for a moment and then went on. "I haven't got any strength, like the kind you're talking about."

"Sure you do, Jim," the captain said.

"Naw," the boy continued, "Ever since I was little I kind of roamed 'round, you know. A kid don't have much thought of what he does or wants to do if he don't have no one to talk to about it. Like I said, I really ain't thought much about it until now."

The boy swallowed.

"Well, I mean—ah, I guess I didn't care 'bout nothing much until I come to know you and Miss Bertha." He turned quickly away.

The captain smiled gently and laid his hand upon the boy's shoulder. A few moments passed. Then he spoke very slowly, as if measuring each word.

"We both know you as a son, Jim—Bertha and me. We want you to stay on—to stay on for good with us if you have a mind to."

"Captain," the boy interrupted.

"Now don't you go telling me no story," the captain said in a firm voice. "You know we want you."

The boy nodded. "Mighty nice of both of you," he said, "I—well, guess . . ."

"Fine, that's settled," the captain said. "And you'll find your place, Jim—the one you want. I know you will boy, with all these good years ahead of you. You don't think much of all this salt water like me, huh?" he added with a twinkle in his eye.

"Well, I'm not . . ." the boy croaked.

"Your first sailing, ain't it?"

The boy hung his head and moved it slightly up and down.

"Well now, I think you're doing real well. A real good hand, I'd say. Yes sir. Now you get yourself on in the cabin and grab a lunch bucket."

"No thanks, sir, I can manage if we got a job to do," came the reply.

The boy stretched to full height and stuck out his chin determinedly. The slow drizzle surrounded him, making him look like a gray armored and long-forgotten knight, patiently waiting to be of service to his king.

"Sir, you're off duty for a spell!"

The boy relaxed and grinned, "Aye, aye Captain," he said smartly and disappeared through the cabin door. Suddenly the captain saw him as he had never seen him before, during the few months since he had known him, since he and Bertha had taken him to their hearts.

* * * * *

Captain Andrew squinted out over the bow of the schooner. A deep mist had set in now, and the wind had almost completely died down. It was still below freezing. Standing silent and majestic, the vessel looked like a phantom ship, as it lay lodged in the lull of late evening.

"Not far from home now, Jim," he said. "See that shoreline over there, there boy to your left—that's home." He spat into the water. "Sure wish this wind would rise up a little," he continued. "Haven't moved much within the last half hour."

Jim followed with eager eyes the direction in which the captain pointed. The mists kept passing before him, as if determined to separate him from the rest of the world—from his home.

"Going to check around now, Jim," the captain said.

The boy nodded, but heard nothing. His eyes searched through the mists for the shore.

* * * * *

Captain Andrew had returned from his tour of the schooner. A quarter of an hour had passed by, and he still could not reason with the boy.

"Jim, you listen closely to me now. Now you listen." The captain's brown, hairy hands shook the boy's thin, bony shoulders. "Listen now, I mean it, listen to what I say again. The Mary E. is sinking, Jim, she's sprung a leak—don't know how, too dark down there to see. I knew something was wrong when I felt the schooner settling."

The boy stood in shocked silence, staring straight ahead and saying nothing.

"Stop looking bad like that boy—now listen Jim," the captain screamed. "We've got no time; we've got to hurry."

Captain Andrew grabbed the boy around his collar. He took a deep breath and slapped him hard across his face with the back of his hand. The boy's head flew backward. His eyes were wide and expressionless. Suddenly his mouth began to twitch slowly.

"Captain, Captain, what's . . ." he began. His head fell down upon his chest, and taking a long step he moved forward and sank sobbing against the captain. The big man held him closely.

"Hear me out now, Jim," he said slowly.

The boy ceased sobbing and straightened up quietly and obediently. Silent tears streamed down his face.

"Jim now," the captain started, "this here's a hatch—all I got for you to use. It will be your life preserver."

The captain's voice droned on and on explaining everything carefully. The boy felt the ropes winding about his waist. They felt heavy and strange through his thick wet jacket. He followed the captain to the bow of the schooner. Again the captain's voice came to him through the stillness of the mist.

"You're firmly attached to the hatch now, Jim. The tide is running right; it will carry you straight to the shore. Look over here, see where I'm pointing—that's the shore. See it, right over there—not far at all. The hatch will keep you afloat. Hurry Jim."

The boy didn't move.

"Captain," he said gently, "you know, captain, I can't swim." Suddenly he tore at the ropes around his body. "I can't swim, I can't swim," he screamed.

Quickly the captain caught the boy up in his strong arms. "Trust me, Jim," he said, "just trust me. The tide will carry you right to the shore—right to home. I promise you that, boy; it's all right now. I told you it's nothing to worry about. Soon we'll both be home, just like we planned."

But the boy was far away. He was thinking of himself standing tall and strong in a great field bathed in sunlight. "Funny I should remember that now," he thought. "Oh yes, it was the day I had walked and walked and had entered into a big field." Suddenly he could feel the wind ruffling his hair, and he could feel the tall dry wheat swishing and swaying about his thighs. Here he had met the captain and Miss Bertha and had stayed on to help them. He knew that he had belonged there that day; he could tell by the sensation that ran through him. The feeling of the soft dirt seeping around his toes and the golden wheat, the wheat—yes, the feeling of the strength of the wheat had told him so. "That was it," he remembered suddenly. Although it had not become clear to him until now, he recognized his strength—the strength of the wheat. "If only it isn't too late," he mumbled.

At that same moment Captain Andrew felt the vessel settling steadily. He closed his eyes and lowered the boy over the side. A small splash was heard in the stillness.

"Oh, God. Oh, God," a voice screamed in the darkness.

The captain peered down into the water, but saw nothing. He trembled. Somewhere out there was a boy—his boy! He bit his lips and cupped his hands around his mouth. "Jim, Jim," he shouted, "you'll make it, just keep calm, you're as good as home." Not a sound was heard. "You're as good as home," his own voice answered.

Captain Andrew wiped the sweat that poured down his face and steadied himself. He stood there for the first time in his life not knowing what to do and heard the salt water rushing in.

* * * * *

The morning broke swiftly, sending forth brilliant rays that dispelled any hint of gloomy weather. Two men walked quickly along the shore. They pointed excitedly at something ahead of them, lying partially in the calm sparkling water. The sun broke through the heavens and shone directly upon the object. It was motionless.

The men looked down upon the figure, lying face downward in the sand with clenched hands that were stretched forward. Gently they turned the figure over and saw a youth twisted and tangled in thick ropes and a hatch.

"Drowned?" the first man said.

The other stared for a moment. "Naw," he said finally, "I'd say it looks more like shock and too long exposure in the water. It was freezing last night, you know."

The other nodded.

"Awfully bad, you know, a young boy and all that. What a shame."

His companion shook his head in agreement.

"Well, better get some of the guys together and see what we can do about this. Wonder what schooner this hatch came off of?"

"Sure is a mystery," the other commented. "We'd better tell the others right away. Somebody must know him."

They started up the path carrying the boy. A soft breeze blew toward the shore a smell of salt water that slowly made its way toward the land.



We have a great neighborhood. We'll tell anybody that. There's not a better one in the whole state of Florida for that matter. It's located on a little point of land across the bay from the Naval Air Station. Ten years ago there wasn't much on this point but some scrubby palm trees and a lot of muck. Then some enterprising real-estate man got hold of it, dumped some sand around in the way of filling it in, and built some modern-looking little houses facing out towards the bay. He even stuck a name on it—Stannysdale Acres, he called it. Heal, I'm afraid, but he had it in his mind to sell to the Navy families who were having a hard time of it finding a place to rent. He did not expect for a few of us civilians who liked the look of the place. All of us took over on the base shortly as you might say we're connected with the Navy.

What with all the Navy people living here seems like somebody's all the time moving in or moving out. We no more than get acquainted before they up and get transferred. But they're all friendly folks and it doesn't take long for the new ones to fall right in and take a liking to our way of life.

We mostly live outside, down on the beach. We all get home from work around four in the afternoon, and the first thing we do is change clothes and head for the beach. Boy, that nice cool dip really perks you up after a hot day. Then while the girls—that's what we call our wives—keep on feeling young, while the fix support we get out the boats and do some water skiing. The breeze always dies down in the afternoon and the water is as smooth as glass. Give you the greatest feeling in the world to be sailing down the bay.

Nod To Me

"There'll come a day, yes soon my dear, when maturity will bring
A mind that cannot fluctuate twixt winter and the spring of life." But
now decisions hindering, fate is a Janus god,
Who at a one way street looks both and suddenly gives nod
To me.

Judith Grove

VAIN EMPIRE

Joyce Casteen

We have a great neighborhood. We'll tell anybody that. There's not a better one in the whole state of Florida for that matter. It's located on a little point of land across the bay from the Naval Air Station. Ten years ago, there wasn't much on this point but some scrubby palmettos and a lot of muck. Then some enterprising real-estate man got hold of it, dumped some sand around in the way of filling it in, and built some modern-looking little houses facing out towards the bay. He even stuck a name on it—Sunnydale Acres, he called it. Real friendly-sounding, isn't it? He had it in his mind to sell to the Navy families who were having a hard time of it finding a place to rent. He did too, except for a few of us civilians who liked the looks of the place. All of us work over on the base though, so you might say we're connected with the Navy.

What with all the Navy people living here, seems like somebody's all the time moving in or moving out. We no more than get acquainted before they up and get transferred. But they're all friendly folks and it doesn't take long for the new ones to fall right in and take a liking to our way of life.

We mostly live outside, down on the beach. We all get home from work around four in the afternoon, and the first thing we do is change clothes and head for the beach. Boy, that nice cool dip really perks you up after a long, hot day. Then while the girls—that's what we call our wives, keeps 'em feeling young—while they fix supper, we get out the boats and do some water-skiing. The breeze always dies along about this time and the water gets as smooth as glass. Gives you the greatest feeling in the world to go skimming over it—just like you were flying or something. There's nothing like it.

Along about six-thirty, the kids start clamoring to go in 'cause they're hungry. Those kids of mine—honest to God—I think I could tell time by their stomachs. Lots of times, we all eat picnic-style down on the beach. Most of us have built picnic tables and barbeque pits down there and it makes it real nice. After we finish eating, we sit around with a cold beer and shoot the breeze while the kids romp. It's real pretty out there when the sun is going down. The water gets all red and pink, just like the sky and everything

seems to get quiet—even the kids for a change. It isn't long though before the frogs start up their croaking and when the insects join in, you've never heard such a racket! By then, it's time to take the kids up, clean 'em off, and get 'em in bed. What with all the swimming and water-skiing, it's not long before we're in bed too.

Maybe you wouldn't call it a glamorous kind of life, exactly, but we have a lot of fun. Oh, I'll admit once in a while some of us don't quite see eye-to-eye on some things, but all in all we get on like one big happy family.

The only time I remember things being any different was when Chief Nicholas was living here. I guess it's been about a year now since he was transferred and there wasn't a one of us that was sorry to see him go. It's funny, too, that things



should have turned out the way they did. We all took a real liking to him and his family when they first moved in.

He was a short man, but he was built solid. He had a right kindly face and a big, hearty laugh. You know, the kind that makes you want to laugh even if you don't know what's funny. I'd judge he was in his middle forties or thereabouts. Mrs. Nicholas was a young thing; she didn't look much over twenty-five, but of course it's hard to tell about women nowadays, what with all the beauty preparations and stuff they use to stay young-looking.

They had a little boy, too. Jerry was about three, I guess, and I'll have to admit he was a

cute little kid. The chief almost worshipped him. In the afternoons after work, he'd no more than get out the car before he was yelling for Jerry. He would bring him along when we went swimming and he'd keep a close eye on him, too. The rest of us let our kids look after themselves for the most part, but then Jerry was kind of small.

The chief wasn't much at water-skiing, so when the rest of us went out in the boats, he'd sit up on the beach and watch us, yelling and waving to us when we passed, and he'd join heartily in the laughing when somebody fell off. Jerry would be right there with him, digging in the sand or wading. He always stayed real close to his father.

There was something between those two, all right. You could see it when the chief looked at the kid and you could see it in the way Jerry looked at his father, with trust almost shining in his little face. It was a little hard for the rest of us to understand. We love our kids, sure, but it's always good to get away from them every now and then. If anything can drive you nuts at times, it's kids!

Ed was joshing the chief some about it on the way to work one day, since we rode in the same carpool. The six of us had been laughing and joking like we always do—the chief laughing the loudest as usual—when Ed said, "Chief, it just ain't natural, that kid of yours. If my kid followed me around like that, I'd take him to get his head examined. He'd have to be sick or want something bad."

We all laughed, all except the chief, that is.

"What's wrong with a boy following his father around?" he said. "I don't mind. Jerry's a good boy. What's wrong with it?"

"Nothing, Chief," I said. "Ed was just kidding."

"Okay." The chief smiled. "But don't make jokes about Jerry. He's going to be an admiral someday, you wait."

"Can you beat that?" I said. "Most people want their kids to grow up to be President or something, but not a Navy man! Admiral Nicholas—sounds good, don't it? Real distinguished-like."

The chief just laughed, and when we let him off at his hangar, everything seemed to be okay again.

We didn't kid the chief about Jerry anymore after that. We formed a sort of plot among our-

selves, though, to get him out by himself once in a while. We thought Mrs. Nicholas should take care of Jerry more herself. After all, it was her job, not the chief's.

We worked real hard on teaching the chief to water-ski. We took him out every afternoon and finally he was getting better at it than we were. At first, Jerry stayed up on the beach watching us, but it wasn't long before he was chasing after the other kids and having himself a big time. Everything was going along just fine in Sunnydale Acres.

There isn't much difference in the seasons where we live. Summer is a little hotter and brighter than the rest of the year, but then the sky gets a little bluer and that makes up for it. It was promising to be a good summer when it happened. Yes, sir! It happened just like that.

The Nicholases had been living here about six months, I guess. By that time we had all taken quite a liking to the chief. Seemed like he always had something cheerful to say when things weren't going just right. But his laugh was the main thing. You just couldn't hear that laugh without liking him. It got to be a symbol, you might say, for all the good times we had in Sunnydale Acres. But after it happened, I never heard him laugh again. Don't think anybody else did either.

Come to think of it, he was right in the middle of a laugh when the trouble started. It was on a Saturday afternoon when him and me were down on the beach working on my motor. I'd been having trouble starting the blamed thing, so he was helping me fix it. I had talked him into leaving Jerry up at the house with his mother, you know how kids always get in your way when you're trying to do something. We had been working a couple of hours when Mrs. Nicholas came running down, looking all fretful and worried.

"Nick, is Jerry down here with you?"

The chief just looked kind of dumb. "No. I told him he had to stay up at the house, you know that. Where is he?"

"I don't know." Mrs. Nicholas was breathing hard. "He was taking his nap and I just went next door for a second. I didn't mean to stay, but we got to talking and all—when I got back to the house, he was gone. I thought he was asleep when I left. Where in the world did he go?"

Now the chief looked worried. But he tried to laugh. "Now don't get excited," he said. "He's probably out in the yard somewhere. Sure. He just decided he wanted to go exploring by himself for a change. He couldn't have gone far."

"But I looked, Nick. I called and called him. Didn't you hear me? He's not up there. Then I thought he might be down here with you. We've got to find him."

"Okay, okay. We'll find him. Sure we'll find him. He couldn't have gone far."

They found him four hours later. The chief brought the little body up on the beach just as the sun was going down. A Navy helicopter, helping in the search, had spotted it in the water about twenty yards off shore around the bend of the point.

None of us said a word, we just stood there and watched him bring it in. He laid the little boy down gently on the sand almost like Jerry was asleep and he might wake him up. Then he reached out his hand and pushed the wet hair back out of Jerry's eyes.

About that time, the doctor came rushing up. Don't know who called him, but there he was. He started in giving Jerry artificial respiration. The chief just looked at him.

"It's no use, Doc," he said. Said it very calmly he did, just like that. "It's no use. He's dead."

Then he stood up and started walking up to his house. He walked away, just like that.

Well, none of us knew what to do. Mrs. Nicholas had collapsed and my wife and a few of the other girls had taken her up to our place. The doctor was still working on Jerry but it looked pretty hopeless. We just stood around watching him like we were in a daze or something. Finally he stood up and shook his head. Sounded like he muttered, "Poor kid," or something like that, but I don't remember exactly. The rest of that night there was nothing but confusion.

The funeral was held a couple of days later. All of Sunnydale Acres turned out for it, too. Some said the chief wasn't even coming. He hadn't left the house since that night. But he came. He came with his head up and looked everyone of us straight in the eye. He had a funny expression on his face though, like he thought we were ugly or smelling bad or something. Looks like to me he would have been

proud that we all cared enough to come, but he didn't act like he was.

After it was over, he didn't say a word to anyone. He put Mrs. Nicholas in the car and they drove off as quick as you please. Didn't give any of us a chance even to tell him how sorry we were or anything. They just left.

But we were sorry, we really were. It was the first time anything like that had ever happened in Sunnydale Acres. It gave us a kind of uneasy feeling that didn't set too well.

The trouble was we didn't want to stay sorry forever, and it seemed like the chief did. He didn't ride to work with us anymore, he drove his own car every day. Mornings, if we got up early enough, we could see him down on the beach, just standing there staring at the water. Afternoons, if we went swimming or had our supper on the beach, he'd walk by close to the water's edge and just look at us with that same funny expression that he'd had at the funeral.

Then he started that calling business. Yes sir! Every afternoon just as the sun was going down, he'd stand down by the water and call, "Jerry! Jer—ry!" over and over. Talk about something giving you the creeps! It had everybody in the neighborhood on edge. We didn't know what to do about it, either. He'd shown us plain enough he didn't want our sympathy. Something had to be done though; we couldn't have stood it much longer.

But then the chief got his orders to be transferred. Well, I'm telling you, that moving van carried more out of Sunnydale Acres than just house furnishings. You could almost hear the sigh of relief that went up as it pulled away.

We haven't heard anything of the Nicholases since they left. It didn't take long for us to fall back into our old way of life. At first it seemed strange to be enjoying ourselves again, but now things are back to normal, just like they always were. We really enjoy it too, because, like I said, we have a great neighborhood.

A funny thing happened last night, though. A young lieutenant who just moved in with his bride about a week ago was sitting down on the beach drinking beer with us. We were watching the sun go down as usual and everything was quiet, when all of a sudden he stopped in the middle of what he was saying. He leaned forward like he was listening to something. Then he looked at us, kind of puzzled-like.

"Who's Jerry?" he asked.

WHEN SUMMER CAME by Annie Lee Jernigan

It was hot that summer, but Kirk knew all the deep shady places. He knew when the sun would be laughing above the rocks by the water burning them with a fiery breath, or when the wanton air would be crawling over them calming them with tepid kisses and leaving them cool and smooth to the touch. The horses would drag their flaccid ropes along the ground as they bent their necks to the water. Sometimes while they waited, she and Kirk would pummel each other with wet reeds, their laughter like atoms, until the horses would jerk back their heads, their eyes wild. Or sometimes they would sit quietly on the rocks with their feet in the water and feel a sameness with others whose feet also knew the water, and the only sounds would be those of life and the horses drinking with their teeth against the water.

When the first smoke from smoldering leaves thickened the air, she left her grandmother's and returned to the city. In November she received the clipping from the county newspaper of Kirk's death. She looked at the boy who had Kirk's hair and eyes and mouth, but he was a stranger. She felt nothing except an empty voice inside her whispering that it was not Kirk but a boy she had

never known who had been killed by a horse she had never touched.

"It's a shame about that boy getting killed, but he meant nothing to you," her mother said. Her nervous eyes moved over her daughter's face to make sure.

"No, he meant nothing."

She carried Kirk's picture in her wallet so the girls at school would ask who he was and she could say that he was a boy she knew who had gotten killed. Yet even when their eyes became wide with sympathy, she felt nothing but a cold thrill of importance.

When summer came she went back to her grandmother's. It was raining when she rode out to the rocks. Water clung like crystal beads to the leaves before dropping into the water to make tiny circles which quivered and disappeared. She stood by the rocks and watched the rain as it slid like tears down their wet cheeks. She half expected to hear Kirk creep up behind her, laughing and waving a clammy reed. But Kirk would not come. Kirk was dead. Drawing close to the rocks, she put her face against them and began to cry.

LOST LOVE

Water gently beating, beating
Against the window pane
Lonely souls are speaking, speaking
In every drop of rain
In every drop of rain.

In the darkness seeking, seeking
Too late, a search in vain
The minds knows only weeping, weeping
The heart feels only pain
The heart feels only pain.

— Annie Lee Jernigan

The Art of Enjoying a Movie . . . Nita Anderson

"Get more out of life—enjoy a movie." That quote from the cinema capital has been popular for several years. Exactly how can someone enjoy a movie?

You go to a movie, feel your way in, find a seat in the center of the theater, have a perfect view of the screen and are all ready to see a good movie when someone behind you begins opening a candy bar. You decide that you will not miss too much of the movie so you sit there. About that time a man and his wife come in and of all the seats in the house, they pick the two next to you, so they begin climbing over the people in the row. They get to you, you rise in your seat, they get in front of you and then almost change their minds about sitting there. Meanwhile, you are supporting yourself on one hand and one big toe, holding a coat, scarf, pocketbook, a box of peanuts and gloves, hoping the people behind you don't call the manager for your blocking the screen. The couple decide to sit down, you decide to sit down, and the box of peanuts decides to fall on the floor. You hear sighs of disgust because your box of peanuts has made too much noise. You hear the two ladies on your left talking about the care and planting of rosebushes and Mrs. Jones' new rug which doesn't go with her furniture at all.

The scene changes on the screen. All that is shown is a woman talking on a telephone and the shadow of a gun on the wall behind her.

Everything is silent and then someone down front calls out "She's gonna get killed!" You hear the fatal shot and the Stereophonic Sound makes it seem so real you feel your back to make certain that you were not the target.

About that time, the little boy sitting two rows in front of you decides to get some more popcorn. He is almost out when his little friend calls to him, "Hey, Jim, bring me some, too!" Jim answers, "O. K." and you've only missed four more of the main lines leading to the solution of the mystery.

Finally, after some more helpful hints about rosebushes and a few more lines supplied by the voice down front, you recognize the picture on the screen and prepare to leave. You pick up your coat, your scarf, your pocketbook and your gloves; you throw away the empty peanut box and walk toward the door. Because you have been sitting for a long time, you wobble out and when you get to the door, you bump into the usher.

You think as you go home, "They should turn off the sound and let the audience fill in their own lines or they could turn off the whole movie, turn on the lights and let the people talk and eat just as they please." You are so tired, though, that you decide that it wasn't such a bad story; you had the mystery figured out all the time and you will not complain, for, after all, "Movies are Better Than Ever."

LOST LOVE

Water gently beating
Against the window pane
Lonely souls are speaking
In every drop of rain
In every drop of rain.

In the darkness seeking
Too late, a search in vain
The mind knows only weeping
The heart feels only pain
The heart feels only pain.

—Annie Lee Ferguson

